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ABSTRACT

This issue of the "News Research Bulletin" contains reports on two studies of media use by contemporary young adults. The first study analyzes the media behavior of 447 randomly selected respondents in Virginia Beach, Virginia in the summer of 1973. Some of the highlights of the study were that about 90 percent of the young people report doing at least some reading in a daily newspaper several days a week or more often; most television viewing time is given to entertainment and non-news information; a majority believe television is the most accurate of the four major mass media; and a majority say that newspapers provide the most complete coverage of events. The second study concerns 292 randomly selected young voters (ages 18-20) and their use of the mass media during the 1972 presidential election campaign. Some of the findings in this study were that 42 percent of the students said newspapers are the best way for "keeping up with what is going on in the world today" while 27 percent selected television; and the data support, although they do not prove, the hypothesis that the mass media tend to set the agenda for people concerning the most important issues. (RB)

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Two Studies of Mass Media Use By Contemporary Young Adults

In recent years print media personnel have become concerned about the media use of young adults (ages 18-29), the first "television generation" in America.

This issue of the **News Research Bulletin** contains reports on two studies of media use by contemporary young adults. The studies also report some findings about the attitudes of these young people toward the mass media.

The first study, done with financial assistance from Landmark Communications, Inc., concerns newspaper readership and, to a lesser degree, television viewing by people age 18-29. It analyzes media behavior of 447 randomly selected respondents in Virginia Beach, Va., in the summer of 1973. Although caution should be used in generalizing the findings to all young adults throughout the United States, the data should prove interesting and provocative to newspaper people everywhere.

A few highlights of the study are these:

1) About 90 percent of these young people report doing at least some reading in a daily newspaper several days a week or more often.

2) Although the respondents report spending much more time watching television than reading newspapers, most of the TV time is given to entertainment and information other than news.

3) A majority of these young people say television is the most accurate of the four major mass media, with newspapers ranking well ahead of magazines and radio.

4) A majority of the young adults say newspapers give the most complete coverage of events, with television rating well ahead of magazines and radio.

The second study, conducted by the School of Journalism of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and funded in part by the National Association of Broadcasters, concerns young voters (age 18-20) and their use of the mass media. The respondents were 292 randomly selected undergraduates at

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the University during the presidential election campaign of 1972. (That was the first election, of course, in which people of this age range throughout the country could vote.)

Again, caution is urged in generalizing the findings to all undergraduate students in the United States, but the authors make comparisons with a study done at the University of California in Los Angeles which produced quite similar findings.

A few findings of the North Carolina study are as follows:

1) More of these college students (42%) said newspapers are best for "keeping up with what's going on in the world today" than selected television (27%).

2) News magazines were said by 50% of the students to provide the best way "to follow the news of the election campaign." Newspapers were the second choice (33%).

3) Students with "high political interest" are particularly likely to turn to newspapers, especially for in-depth reporting, interpretation and analysis.

4) The data support, though they do not prove, the hypothesis that the mass media tend to "set the agenda" for people. The students mostly selected as the major issues in the 1972 campaign those issues which received the greatest amount of space in newspapers and the one issue which received the most time in the newscasts of the three major television networks.

Daily Newspaper Readership Among 18 to 29 Year Olds

By John C. Schweitzer, School of Journalism, Indiana University.

Two recent studies of newspaper readership have reported that newspaper readers are more likely to be found among older than younger persons. In a study reported by Dr. Galen Rarick, it was found that households in which the chief breadwinner was between the ages of 35 and 65, were more likely to be subscribers to the local newspaper. In a study reported in an earlier **News Research Bulletin**, it was found that respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 were the least likely of the adults to have read a newspaper "yesterday." The next least likely group to have read the newspaper "yesterday" was between the ages of 25 and 34.

In a youth-dominated culture such as that of the United States, there is reason to be concerned about these figures. If the readership habits established in a youth persist, what happens to newspaper readership over time?

This report is aimed at trying to analyze the media behavior of the young. The study reported is part of a much larger effort begun in the summer of 1973 in Virginia Beach, Va. The sample consisted of a random selection of some 634 apartment units and 200 single family dwellings. This report is concerned with the media behavior of only those respondents who were between the ages of 18 and 29. There were ~~228~~ 447 respondents between the ages of 18 and 29; 228 respondents between the ages of 18 and 24, and 219 between the ages of 25 and 29.

Readership

The most striking information was obtained in response to the question, "Are there any **daily** newspapers, either local or out of town, that you read?" A surprising 91% of the total group answered "yes" to the question. There was little preference among them for either the morning or evening newspapers published locally. About equal percentages of them read one or the other. When asked how often the papers were read, the results were much more in line with other studies. Only 62% of the total group read the morning paper "daily." The afternoon paper fared somewhat better, with 80% reporting that they read it daily.

For both the morning and the afternoon papers the differences between respondents who were 18-24 and those

who were 25-29 were striking. For example, only 55% of those between the ages of 18 and 24 read the morning paper daily, but 69% of those between 25 and 29 read the same paper daily. Similarly 74% of the 18-24 group reported reading the afternoon paper daily compared to 86% of the "older" group.

It would appear that age is very strongly correlated with readership. These findings were consistent with other studies

TABLE 1

Readership Of The Morning And Afternoon Newspapers, By Age Groups

	Age Groups		
	18-24 [N=228]	25-29 [N=219]	18-29 [N=447]
How Often Reads Morning Paper?			
Daily	54.6%	69.2%	62.1%
Several times a week	18.3	16.7	17.4
Weekly	23.6	12.4	17.9
Less often	3.5	1.7	2.6
How Often Reads Afternoon Paper?			
Daily	73.8%	85.7%	79.7%
Several times a week	18.0	8.4	13.3
Weekly	6.6	3.4	5.0
Less often	1.6	2.5	2.0

reporting that readership (to a point) is positively correlated with age. These results are reported in Table 1.

Amount Of Time Spent With Paper

The amount of time spent reading newspapers had a slight inverse but the difference for the morning paper was too small to be meaningful. Approximately half of each age group spent 15 to 30 minutes with the morning paper, while slightly more than one-third of them read it for 30 minutes to an hour.

The figures for the amount of time spent with the afternoon paper show that the younger group spent more time with it than did the 25 to 29 year-olds. Some 51.7% of the 18-25 year-old group spend 30 minutes or more with the afternoon paper, compared to only 39.3% of the older group.

TABLE 2

Amount of Time Spent Reading Newspapers, By Age Group

	Age Groups		
	18-24	25-29	18-29
Time Spent Reading Morning Newspaper			
15 minutes	50.9%	52.6%	51.8%
30 minutes	35.5	37.1	36.3
1 hour or more	13.6	10.3	11.9
Time Spent Reading Afternoon Newspaper			
15 minutes	48.3	60.7	54.3
30 minutes	44.1	33.9	39.1
1 hour or more	7.6	5.4	6.6

The amount of time spent reading the newspaper should be correlated with the amount of the newspaper read. Indeed the results show that it is. Among the younger group, the data in Table 2 show that the majority of them spent between 15 and 30 minutes reading the morning paper. The data presented in Table 3 show that two-thirds of them claimed only to have read "some" or to have "glanced" at the morning paper. On the other hand, with respect to the afternoon paper, the majority of the 18-24 year-old group indicated that they spent more than 30 minutes with the paper, and nearly 50% of them said they read most of the paper.

The 25-29 age group spent more time with the morning paper than with the afternoon paper. Accordingly, these readers were somewhat less likely to have only glanced at the morning paper.

TABLE 3

Amount of Each Newspaper Read, By Age Group

	Age Groups		
	18-24	25-29	18-29
Amount of Morning Paper Read			
Most	33.9%	47.9%	41.0%
Some	45.2	44.5	44.9
Glance	20.9	7.6	14.1
Amount of Afternoon Paper Read			
Most	47.5	45.8	46.7
Some	37.7	43.2	40.4
Glance	14.8	11.0	12.9

Comparison With Television

The study also compared the respondents with respect to television news viewing frequency.

About 18% of the total sample reported watching television news daily. The "older" group was more likely to watch television news than was the "younger" group. Only 15% of those 18-24 reported watching television news daily, while 21% of those between 25 and 29 did so.

When asked if they ever looked in the newspaper to find out more about something (not necessarily news) they had seen on television, every person in the sample answered "yes." In fact, 79% of the entire sample reported looking something up in the paper at least once a week. These data are shown in Table 4.

Newspaper editors and publishers can take heart with another finding of the study. When asked which one of the media gives the most complete news coverage, newspapers came out on top of television. Among the 18-24 year-olds, 51% gave the nod the newspapers, and 40% to television. Among the 25-29 year-olds, 48% voted for newspapers, compared to 38% for television.

Television, however, got the vote for giving the clearest understanding of the candidates and issues in national elections. When asked this question, 48% of the younger group gave the vote to television and 30% to newspapers. Of the older group, 43% voted for television and 26% for newspapers.

TABLE 4

Frequency Of Looking In Newspaper For More Information About Something Seen on Television

	Age Groups		
	18-24	25-29	18-29
Ever look in paper for more information?			
Yes	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
No	0	0	0
How often looks in paper for more information?			
Almost daily	37.6	30.7	34.0
Once or twice a week	42.6	47.3	45.0
Less often	19.8	22.0	20.9

When asked the same question but with respect to state and local elections, young readers gave newspapers their vote of confidence by a fairly large margin. Among the 18-24 year-olds, 53% gave the nod to newspapers for state elections, and 54% voted for newspapers over television in local elections. Among the 25-29 year-olds, 64% preferred newspapers to television for state elections and 72% liked newspapers more than television for local elections.

There is, however, a sobering note for newspaper people. When asked which medium was the most accurate ("In other words, if they gave you different versions of the same story which would you believe?") the respondents switched their positions. Among the 18-24 year-olds, 59% said "television." Among the 25-29 year-olds, 51% were more confident of television than they were of newspapers. Magazines hardly registered with these age groups. Only 9% of the 18-24 year-olds thought they would believe magazines over both television and newspapers, and just 18% of the older group preferred magazines to television and newspapers.

When asked where they got most of their information (not just news), both age groups favored television over newspapers, the younger group, as might be expected, more so than the older group. But not by much. Some 48% of the 18-24 year-old group and 46% of the 25-29 year-old group favored television as their primary source of information. Newspapers were the source of most information for 35% of the 18-24 group and 44% of the 25-29 group. These results are reported in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Clearness, Accuracy And Use Of Different Media, By Age Groups

	Age Groups		
Which gives you the clearest understanding of the candidates and issues in:	18-24	25-29	18-29
National Elections			
Television	48.1%	43.4%	45.8%
Newspapers	29.6	25.9	27.8
Radio	0	0	0
Magazines	19.0	28.8	23.8
Other People	3.2	1.9	2.6
State Elections			
Television	39.8	29.2	34.5
Newspapers	53.4	63.6	58.6
Radio	1.0	1.4	1.2
Magazines	1.5	2.4	1.9
Other People	4.4	3.3	3.9
Local Elections			
Television	32.7	22.2	27.4
Newspapers	53.7	71.5	62.6
Radio	4.4	3.4	3.9
Magazines	0.5	0	0.2
Other People	8.8	2.9	5.8

Which is most accurate; Which do you most believe?			
Television	38.6	51.3	55.1
Newspapers	28.6	27.2	27.9
Radio	3.8	1.0	2.5
Magazines	8.6	17.8	13.0
Other People	0.5	2.6	1.5
Where do you get most of your information?			
Television	47.6	46.3	47.0
Newspapers	35.2	44.0	39.6
Radio	11.0	2.8	7.0
Magazines	4.8	5.5	5.2
Other People	1.3	1.4	1.3

Controlling For Time Spent Watching TV

When the amount of time spent watching television is taken into account, the 18-24 year-olds who spend less than one hour a day watching television were evenly split between their perceptions of the accuracy of the two media. Some 37% of them rated television as the most accurate medium, but the same percentage rated newspapers as the most accurate. Among those who spent five hours a day or more watching television, however, some 70% rated television as the most accurate, compared to 27% who rated newspapers most accurate.

Among the 25-29 year-olds, time spent watching television made a difference, but television was consistently rated the most accurate of the media. For example, among the 25-29 year-olds who spent less than one hour a day watching television, 41% rated television as the most accurate medium, compared with 29% who ranked newspapers most accurate. Among those who spent five or more hours a day watching television, 65% rated television most accurate. Only 25% rate newspapers most accurate.

With respect to completeness of coverage, the results are somewhat mixed. The younger group consistently gave newspapers the edge regardless of amount of time spent watching television. For example, 59% of those who spent less than one hour a day watching television ranked

newspapers as giving more complete coverage than any other medium. Among those who watched television five or more hours a day, 52% ranked newspapers ahead of the other media.

Among the older group on the other hand, the respondents who watched little television ranked newspapers as the most complete medium, but those who spent a lot of time watching television ranked television as the most complete in coverage. Some 67% of those between 25 and 29 who watched television five or more hours a day ranked television ahead of all other media in completeness of coverage, but 50% of those who watched less than an hour of television ranked newspapers ahead of all other media in completeness of coverage. These data are reported in Table 6.

Controlling For Education

Controlling for education did not change the discrepancy between the two age groups' perception of the two media. Among the 18-24 year-olds, education was related to the perception of the accuracy of the media. Among those with no more than eight years of education, 100% ranked television as the most accurate medium. Among those with 17 or more years of education, 40% ranked newspapers as most accurate while only 20% ranked television as the most accurate. On the other hand, among those respondents between the ages of 25 and 29, newspapers were ranked the most accurate medium regardless of years of education.

Altogether, the results of this study should be encouraging to newspaper editors and publishers. Newspapers seem to be well and thriving among young people in at least one part of the country. Although second to television in some respects, newspapers are heavily relied upon in other respects and, in many cases, are much more relied upon than television.

There is no question, however, that much less time is spent with newspapers than with television. Even so, the evidence suggests that newspapers are still the primary news source, with most of the television viewing time given to entertainment or other kinds of information.

While generalization from one city to cities in other parts of the country is always questionable, there is nothing to suggest that the respondents in this study were in any way unique because of their geographical location. On the other hand, there is some reason to suspect that the two newspapers are not typical. For one thing, the circulation relative to the

TABLE 6

Completeness And Accuracy Of Coverage Of Media Controlling For Amount Of Television Viewing

Amount of Time Spent Watching Television

Which is the most accurate; Which do you most believe?	Less Than One Hour		Less Than Two Hours		Less Than Three Hours		Less Than Four Hours		Less Than Five Hours		Five Hours or More	
	18-24	25-29	18-24	25-29	18-24	25-29	18-24	25-29	18-24	25-29	18-24	25-29
Television	36.8	41.2	52.9	51.3	50.9	53.2	67.6	51.5	82.1	38.9	70.0	65.0
Newspapers	36.8	29.4	35.3	30.8	33.3	24.2	23.5	21.2	10.7	44.4	26.7	25.0
Radio	10.5	0	5.9	2.6	5.3	0	2.9	3.0	0	0	0	0
Magazines	10.5	17.6	5.9	15.4	10.5	22.6	5.9	21.2	7.1	11.1	3.3	5.0
Other People	5.3	11.8	0	0	[illegible]	0	0	3.0	0	5.6	0	5.0
Total Number	37	17	34	39	57	62	34	33	28	18	30	20
Which gives the most complete coverage?												
Television	18.2	35.0	48.6	27.7	40.0	41.2	33.3	28.9	58.1	43.5	45.2	66.7
Newspapers	59.1	50.0	51.4	55.3	51.7	48.5	53.8	50.0	41.9	47.8	51.6	28.6
Radio	4.5	5.0	0	4.3	3.3	0	2.6	2.6	0	0	0	0
Magazines	18.2	10.0	0	10.6	5.0	10.3	10.3	18.4	0	8.7	3.2	4.8
Other People	0	0	0	2.1	0	0	0	0	0			
Total Number	22		37		60		39		31		31	

number of households was very high. In the area sampled, some 87% of the households subscribed to one or both newspapers. Either the newspapers were admirably filling the informational needs of the area or the circulation department was exceptionally successful. Probably both situations existed.

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Golen Rarick, "Differences Between Daily Newspaper Subscribers and Nonsubscribers," Journalism Quarterly, Volume 50, Number 2 [Summer 1973], pp. 265-70.

"News and Editorial Content and Readership of the Daily Newspaper," News Research Bulletin, Number 5, April 26, 1973, ANPA.

Young Voters And The Mass Media

By L. E. Mullins, School of Journalism, University of North Carolina, and Maxwell E. McCombs, Department of Journalism, Syracuse University.

The 1972 election provided a unique opportunity to study the use of the mass media by youthful voters. It was the first national election since passage of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting 11 million 18-20 year-olds the right to vote.

According to a Census Bureau survey, only about 48% of this group reported that they had voted on election day, November 7, 1972, compared to 71% of the eligible voters in the 45-64 age group.

College students, however, despite obstacles to registration and voting, were much more likely to have voted than young workers. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 292 undergraduate students, in a random sampling, were interviewed about their use of the mass media and interest in the campaign and politics in general. In a follow-up survey (200 interviews), a representative sample of those originally interviewed were asked if they had actually voted and for whom. Nearly 80% said they had voted. The vote split was a close 54% for McGovern and 46% for Nixon. (The split is "close" because in this case sampling error of ± 6.9% could account for the difference).

The Chapel Hill study had three main purposes:

1) To determine which media were relied upon the most for campaign information;

2) To evaluate the relationship between political interest and use of the mass media;

3) To examine the influence of "agenda-setting" -- i.e., the relationship between the importance of the issues to the voters and the emphasis given the various issues in the news media.

While the findings on these points are, strictly speaking, limited to UNC undergraduates, studies conducted by the authors in both North Carolina and California suggest that the major patterns are true for most college undergraduates, the largest source of young votes.

Media Preference

A number of studies (including one by Clarke and Ruggels summarized in Volume 4 of **News Research for Better Newspapers**, pp. 47-50) have determined that the well-educated prefer print media to the electronic for public affairs. This also seems to be the case for college students. In 1967, McCombs found "no evidence of a television psychological set" in a study of UCLA students. Interviews during off-year elections at Chapel Hill have consistently found that students prefer the print media for general news and political news.

Table 1 shows that the 1972 election was no exception:

TABLE 1

Students' Media Preferences For News In General And For Following The Campaign In Particular

FUNCTION				
To keep up with what's going on in the world today (N=279)	Daily newspaper 42.3%	Television 26.9%	News magazine 20.0%	Other/ Undecided 10.8%
To follow the news of the election campaign (N=276)	News magazine 50.0%	Daily newspaper 33.3%	Television 15.6%	Other/ Undecided 0.7%

The print media were strongly preferred by the Chapel Hill students. More than 42% named the daily newspaper as the best medium for keeping up with the news in general, compared to 27% choosing television. While the news magazine was by far the most preferred for following campaign events, more than twice as many students preferred the daily paper as preferred television for this purpose. (Campus media were excluded from the study.)

The question used in the face-to-face interviews was: "Of the four mass media -- radio, television, newspaper and news magazine -- which do you personally find the most useful for . . . "

The question was worded in this manner to avoid the non-comparability of items attempting to compare the amount of time spent in using the various media. This seems to be the kind of question about media behavior that people can answer. It asks them for a subjective preference, rather than an unrealistically objective self-measurement.

We did, of course, ask how frequently they made use of the media in general. The answers to this question showed a pattern of considerably less exposure than that of the general adult population. For example, 52% of the students said they read a commercial daily newspaper "every day or nearly every day," and 36% said they watched television as often.

Television watching, as contrasted with newspaper and news magazine readership, is motivated almost exclusively by a desire to be diverted and/or entertained. One student answered our question about why she watched television with this remark: "Why do I watch? To blow my mind when classes and studying are behind me." Twice as many students said they read the newspaper mainly for the news as said they watched television for that purpose.

There were some differences in exposure frequencies according to year in school. In general, as a student acquires more education he apparently finds more utility in, or need for, both newspaper reading and television watching, as shown in Table 2.

For both television and newspaper frequency, the greatest jump occurs at the senior year. In the case of television, one

TABLE 2

Frequency Of Newspaper and Television Exposure And Year In School

	Newspaper		Television		
	High	Low	High	Low	N
Freshman	43.8%	56.2%	25.3%	74.7%	(70)
Sophomore	50.0	50.0	30.8	69.2	(78)
Junior	50.7	49.3	35.6	64.4	(73)
Senior	63.1	36.9	56.1	43.9	(65)

(High exposure was defined as daily or nearly daily reading (watching) and low was defined as "occasionally/never.")

reason for this is that a greater number of seniors live off campus and have their own television sets. But for frequency of newspaper reading there was no appreciable difference in the behavior of the on- and off-campus respondents. It could be that seniors simply have more time to read the paper, that the habit becomes more ingrained with age, or that changes in life-style make the newspaper more useful.

Males were far more likely than females to read a newspaper frequently (64% compared to 36%), and males

were somewhat more likely to watch television frequently (41% vs. 31%). Males at all levels of education were heavier media users. But, interestingly, females gained on males in moving from freshman through senior years. Males apparently come to college already fairly heavy users of television and newspapers, but by the senior year the gap has narrowed. For example nearly 50% of the male freshmen were frequent newspaper readers. Only 35% of the female freshmen were. But for seniors the difference was less than eight percentage points (60.2 vs. 52.5). The same pattern held for television.

Preference for print media for news and election information did not vary according to year in school or by sex. Apparently, the print media are uniformly seen by all undergraduate young voters as more useful for news and political content.

Political Interest and Media Exposure

In a survey of UCLA students in 1967, McCombs found that exposure to the newspaper, subscription to news magazines, and watching television news and public affairs programs were strongly related to political interest. A similar pattern emerged in the Chapel Hill study, as shown in Table 3.

The question used to assess political interest in both the UCLA and Chapel Hill studies was: "How interested would you say you are in politics? Very much. Somewhat. Not at all."

TABLE 3

Political Interest And Media Use

Newspaper Exposure	High Political Interest		Low Political Interest		N=
High	59.3%	(89)	40.7%	(61)	150
Medium	38.8	(26)	61.2	(41)	67
Low	31.2	(23)	68.8	(51)	74
Television News Exposure					
High	53.6%	(57)	46.4%	(49)	106
Medium	51.4	(38)	48.4	(36)	74
Low	43.9	(49)	46.1	(63)	112
News Magazine Exposure					
High	54.8%	(92)	45.2%	(76)	168
Medium	44.4	(28)	55.6	(35)	63
Low	40.7	(24)	59.3	(35)	59

Those answering "very much" in the Chapel Hill study were considered high in political interest. Those answering "somewhat" or "not at all" were judged low.

In a follow-up analysis of the UCLA data, we examined the functional relationships among education, media use, political interest and a preference for "explanatory" media content (Mass Comm Review, Vol. 1, No. 1). These results give insight into the information-seeking "styles" of the politically interested reader. The extra amount of media use associated with high political interest consisted, to a large degree, of national and international news, analysis of social trends, editorials and opened page content -- what we termed a conceptual orientation to media content. Those lower in political interest objected to interpretive content more frequently. In general these students were more interested in a "bulletin board" approach to the news, and they were far less interested in editorials and news analysis.

Politically interested students made both quantitatively and qualitatively different use of the newspaper. These students expressed an interest in an interpretive style of media content and presentation. They expressed less interest in dead-pan factual reporting of public agency news -- unless such news was tied to a topical issue. Our measure of political interest seems to tap an information-seeking predisposition -- a desire for media content that helps the individual understand rather than merely be informed about the issues of the day.

The Chapel Hill study, using more detailed measures of political interest and content preferences, found exactly the same sort of orientation among those highly interested in politics. In general, the higher the interest in the campaign in general and the greater the importance of politics to the young person, then the greater the expressed interest in newspaper depth reports, editorials, and television news and documentaries (but not political advertising).

In Table 4, we show the correlations between interest in politics and use of the newspaper and television for news and public affairs. These relationships remained essentially intact when controls were introduced for year in school and major. We may interpret these findings as showing that a high degree of political interest is more likely to lead to heavy use of the newspaper for public affairs news than to television for this purpose.

In addition, the newspaper use/political participation relationship was much stronger than the television use/political participation relationship. "Political participation" was measured by a composite scale made up of nine

separate indicators of participation, ranging from attending a political speech or rally to active campaigning.

In a factor analysis of our measures of media preferences, we found separate factors for newspaper reading and

TABLE 4

Political Interest And Use Of Newspapers And Television For News About The Campaign And Other Public Affairs

	Use of the newspaper for public affairs	Use of television for public affairs
Political Interest	.48	.21

(The figures are Pearson correlations, which range from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to +1 (perfect positive correlation).

television viewing among the students across common areas of content. This means that students do not necessarily have parallel content preferences across the major media. Students very high on newspaper public affairs use were not necessarily high on television public affairs use and vice versa. We should emphasize that this generalization applies only to young college students. For married couples, young workers, unmarried professional men and women, and retired people, for example, the facts may be different.

Agenda-Setting

Young voters expressed a high degreee of interest in the issues of the 1972 campaign -- and their ranking of the important issues closely paralleled the emphasis given these issues in the major mass media to which they were exposed.

The idea that one's political reality is in large measure a product of the "pictures in our heads" has been a popular notion at least since Walter Lippmann coined the phrase in Public Opinion in the '20s. But recently the authors and their colleagues at North Carolina and Syracuse have systematically set about to see how close the composite "picture" provided by daily newspapers and the television networks matches the pictures in the heads of various groups of voters.

We asked our young voters what they thought were the "two or three most important issues in the 1972 campaign." Independently, we content-analyzed the (Raleigh) News and Observer, The Charlotte Observer, a composite New York Times/Washington Post and the network evening news shows. We obtained two rather striking results: (1)

newspapers and networks were very similar in their political issue emphases, and (2) student "agenda" closely matched the composite newspaper "agenda." As Table 5 shows, the students' perception of the important issues was especially similar to the play in the News and Observer, the newspaper which is most widely read on the UNC campus.

In Table 5, we can see differences in the apparent effects of TV emphasis and newspaper emphasis. The correlations

TABLE 5

Correlations Between Importance Of Issues To Young Voters And Mass Media Issue Emphasis

NEWSPAPERS	News & Observer	Charlotte Observer	"Post-Times"	All Press*
Most Important Issue	.79	.62	.50	.54
First Two Issues	.91	.79	.39	.74
First Three Issues	.93	.79	.46	.78
NETWORKS	**ABC**	**CBS**	**NBC**	**All Networks***
Most Important Issue	.36	.67	.71	.61
First Two Issues	.18	.51	.55	.60
First Three Issues	.17	.52	.52	.43

*Weighted Average (percentages summed across media to arrive at rank order)

(The figures in the table are rank-order correlations which are based on a formula that takes into account differences in the rankings by the students on each issue and the media ranking based on the column inches or minutes devoted to each issue.)

between student rating of the issues and television emphasis are greater for the first (single most important) issue mentioned. As second and third issues are added in, the correlations with the TV agenda generally drop. The opposite is true of the newspaper agenda-setting effect. The highest correlations occur when all three mentions are accumulated.

This finding suggests that television news, which often concentrates on the single most dramatic development of the day, has its impact in determining the single most important issue among the young voters, and that newspaper news holds other issues on the agenda for longer periods of time.

For example, human rights (women's rights, civil rights, etc.) received the fourth greatest number of mentions as an important issue although it was rarely mentioned as the most important issue. There was relatively little political news

dealing with human rights on television during the time of the analysis, but in the press human rights was third in overall column inches.

We might think of the differences in terms of a "saliency" effect for television and a "latency" effect for newspapers. This difference is due largely, we suspect, to the more comprehensive nature of newspaper political coverage.

Finally, we sought to determine the effect of exposure frequency on agenda setting. Presumably those students with more frequent exposure to newspapers and television would

TABLE 6

Media/Student Agenda Correlations By Level Of Media Exposure

NEWSPAPER EXPOSURE	News Observer	Charlotte Observer	"Post-Times"	All Press*
Low	.86	.71	.28	.73
Medium	.88	.69	.28	.69
High	.96	.90	.62	.90
TELEVISION EXPOSURE	**ABC**	**CBS**	**NBC**	**Total Network**
Low	.85	.47	.41	.39
Medium	.37	.62	.62	.42
High	.24	.42	.62	.36

reflect the media emphases to a greater degree than infrequent users. Student issue rankings do correlate more strongly with newspaper agendas as exposure levels increase, but there is no clear pattern with respect to television, as shown in Table 6.

While the correlations in Tables 5 and 6 do not prove that news media emphases determine young voters' judgments of what the important issues are, they do suggest that news coverage, especially in the newspapers, has the potential for major polticial influence.